



Brussels, 5th May 2014

To the future President of the European Commission,

On behalf of the European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA), established by 62 European networks and gathering more than 4,500 organisations across 50 European countries to work together during the European Year of Citizens, we would like to draw your attention to the publication "It's about Us, It's about Europe!". This document summarises 80 recommendations we collected in our national and European level discussions during 2013 on the demands and aspirations of European citizens.

In a few days' time 400 million European citizens will have the opportunity to choose their 751 representatives in the European Parliament for the next five years, and, for the first time in the history of the European Union, they will also have a say, if the Treaty provisions are followed, on the nomination of the European Commission President.

In times when many citizens are losing confidence in the European project, and when regressive political forces often apportion blame to the European Union for any national problems, we believe that constructive dialogue between the EU institutions and civil society organisations is imperative. EYCA members represent hundreds of millions of citizens and we are willing to engage with the European institutions in order to ensure that future developments of the European project will better match citizens' aspirations. We therefore invite you to engage with us in following concrete steps to help build this dialogue.

The provisions on civil dialogue of Article 11 of the Treaty of Lisbon have not yet been implemented and there is a continued lack of open, transparent and regular dialogue with the EU institutions.

Public concerns, as represented by organised civil society, are largely under-represented in the legislative preparation processes and the later evaluation phases.

We believe that citizens would feel more involved in the European building process if a true dialogue between organised civil society and the European Council were to be set up under the leadership of the European Commission.

It is therefore necessary to develop concrete tools to establish such dialogue and ensure participation, so that citizens feel part of and will contribute to the European Union, rather than feeling subject to it.

A Treaty revision process should be launched in order to reinforce representative democracy, put citizens back at the heart of the European project and restore the legitimacy of the European integration process via democratic methods. This process should include all the relevant stakeholders and be used as a tool to raise awareness of European integration amongst the general public.

In recent years the European Union institutions have been regularly criticised for proposing and even imposing policies of budgetary rigour and austerity measures that have deprived many EU citizens of their fundamental rights. In the current context of crisis, citizens expect a reply to the core question "how to (re)create solidarity so that Europeans regain trust in a common European future?"

Achieving this objective requires a paradigm shift from a Europe that is essentially an economic project to one that restores and promotes the values of solidarity and equality among Member States and European citizens. This, in turn, will mean reforming the current Europe 2020 agenda.

We call on you to include in your programme concrete proposals to set up this dialogue and ensure a more social Europe...

The EYCA Steering Committee

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